

HONORING THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE NEVADA-SI- ERRA PERFORMANCE CLUSTER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedication, hard work, and superior productivity achieved by Nevada's postal employees. Recently the Nevada-Sierra Performance Cluster was ranked as the number one cluster in the country in Overnight Delivery.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is comprised of 79 Performance Clusters that are grouped into 9 geographical areas. The Nevada-Sierra Performance Cluster is part of the Pacific area and is serviced by two plants in Nevada, one in Las Vegas and one in Reno. These two plants process and distribute incoming mail to postal facilities throughout Nevada. Currently 96.7 percent of all Overnight Delivery mail in Nevada is delivered on time, ranking the Nevada-Sierra cluster number one in the country. In addition, as measured by the national USPS Breakthrough Productivity Index, the Nevada-Sierra Performance cluster ranks number 2 in the Nation in overall productivity.

These honors pay tribute to the work of the 5,217 career employees working for the United States Postal Service in Nevada. The productivity of Nevada's postal employees benefits all Nevadans who utilize the United States Postal Service. Each day the employees of the Postal Service reach millions of Nevadans through their work delivering the mail.

I am proud to join with all Nevadans in honoring the employees of the USPS Nevada-Sierra Postal Cluster. I wish them continued success and thank them for their fine work.

SIKHS WILL CELEBRATE 400TH AN- NIVERSARY OF THEIR HOLY SCRIPTURE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Sikhs will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the compilation of their holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, this year. As you may know, there are over 500,000 Sikhs in the United States and about 25 million worldwide.

Observances will include a seminar on June 5 at George Washington University and a parade on August 14 here in Washington.

In June 1984, the Indian government launched a military attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the center and seat of the Sikh religion, and 125 other Sikh Gurdwaras throughout Punjab in which over 20,000 Sikhs were murdered. Indian forces shot bullets through the Guru Granth Sahib, which was a major desecration and an insult to the Sikh people and the Sikh religion. They took over 100 young Sikh boys outside and shot them at point blank range.

Mr. Speaker, the Golden Temple attack made it clear to the Sikhs that there is no place for them in India's Hindu nationalist theocracy. It is against this background that they

declared their independence on October 7, 1987, calling their country Khalistan.

The Golden Temple attack is unacceptable to all civilized people. We must work to ensure that human rights are respected in India and that nothing like the Golden Temple attack, the Gujarat massacre, or the campaign of violence against Christians occurs there again. We can help bring that about by stopping our aid to India until it learns to observe basic human rights.

We can also help by putting this Congress on record in support of a free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan, in Kashmir, as India promised the United Nations in 1948, in primarily Christian Nagaland, and wherever the people are seeking independence. This is the democratic way to settle the issue and India claims to be a democracy, so why are they afraid of holding a free and fair vote?

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has published a press release on the 400th anniversary of the Guni Granth Sahib and the 20th anniversary of the Golden Temple attack. It is very informative, so I would like to insert it into the RECORD at this time.

400TH ANNIVERSARY OF GURU GRANTH SAHIB; 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF GOLDEN TEMPLE AT- TACK

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 10, 2004.—On June 5, Sikhs from around the East Coast will observe the 400th anniversary of the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy scriptures. During India's June 1984 attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the center and seat of the Sikh religion, the Guru Granth Sahib was pierced by Indian Army bullets. The Sikh Nation will never forget the desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib. Political power is essential for the survival of the Sikh Nation.

The Council of Khalistan, the organization leading the Sikh struggle for independence, will hold a demonstration Saturday, June 5, from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. in front of the Indian Embassy at 21st and Massachusetts Ave. NW in Washington, D.C. It will commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the attack on the Golden Temple and 125 other Sikh Gurdwaras in Punjab, in which over 20,000 Sikhs were killed, including such major Sikh leaders as Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, General Shabeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, and others who had taken refuge in the Darbar Sahib complex. The Indian army killed over 100 young religious students, ages 8 to 13. They were taken out into the courtyard and asked whether they supported Khalistan. When they answered "Bole So Nihal," they were shot.

"This attack, along with simultaneous attacks on 125 other Gurdwaras throughout Punjab, was the clearest sign that there is no place for Sikhs in India," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "It is a brutal, tyrannical, fundamentalist Hindu nationalist theocracy," he said. "Sant Bhindranwale said that if the Indian government invaded the Golden Temple, they would lay the foundation of Khalistan," Dr. Aulakh said. "He was right. The movement for Khalistan is strong in Punjab. Just last year, seminars were held on the subject. The fire of freedom burns bright in the hearts of Sikhs."

"The brutal attack on the Golden Temple and the 20-year wave of repression it set off must never be forgotten," Dr. Aulakh said. "Both the Congress Party and the Akalis are complicit in this criminal act against the Sikh Nation," he noted. . . . "India needs to be reminded that 20 years later, Sikhs have not forgiven nor forgotten this brutal atrocity. The younger generation must be reminded of this terrible atrocity."

In addition to the protest, there will be a seminar on Saturday, June 5 at George Washington University to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib. It will be sponsored by the International Conference on Sikh Studies along with Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions of North America.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 85,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According to a study by the Movement Against State Repression, 52,268 Sikhs are being held in illegal detention as political prisoners without charge or trial. Some of them have been held since 1984!

Christian missionary Joseph Cooper was expelled from India after a mob of militant Hindu nationalists allied with the Rashtriya Swayamsewarak Sangh (RSS), a pro-Fascist organization that is the parent organization of the ruling BJP, beat him so severely he had to spend a week in the hospital. In 2002, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims were murdered in Gujarat while police were ordered to stand aside, reminiscent of the 1984 Delhi massacres of Sikhs. Indian newspapers reported that the government planned the Gujarat massacre in advance.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together by the British for their administrative convenience. Sikhs ruled Punjab until 1849 when the British conquered the subcontinent. Sikhs were equal partners during the transfer of power from the British. The Muslim leader Jinnah got Pakistan, the Hindu leaders got India, but the Sikh leadership was fooled by the Hindu leadership promising that Sikhs would have "the glow of freedom" in Northwest India. The Sikhs took their share with India on that promise. For that mistake, Sikhs are suffering now. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted.

"Democracies don't commit genocide," Dr. Aulakh said. "Only in a free and sovereign Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper. In a democracy, the right to self-determination is the sine qua non and India should allow a plebiscite for the freedom of the Sikh Nation," he said. "India should also allow self-determination in Christian Nagaland, Kashmir, Assam, and the other nations fighting for freedom. This is the only way to bring lasting peace to South Asia."

SIKHS CALL FOR AN APOLOGY FROM SENATOR KERRY

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on January 31, 2004 Democratic Presidential Candidate Senator JOHN KERRY referred to "Sikhs in India" as an example of terrorists. As you know, I have been a supporter of freedom for all people in South Asia, including the Sikhs.

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan is well known among my